

**MINUTES OF THE MILLVILLE  
TOWN COUNCIL REGULAR & TELECONFERENCE WORKSHOP  
August 25, 2020 (6:00 p.m. Executive Session; 7:00 p.m. Open Meeting)**

In attendance were Mayor Steve Maneri, Deputy Mayor Ronald Belinko, Treasurer Sharon Brienza, Secretary Barbara Ryer, Council Member Peter Michel, Town Manager Debbie Botchie, and Town Clerk Matt Amerling.

**MOTION TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION.**

Secretary Barbara Ryer motioned to go into Executive Session at 6:00 p.m. Treasurer Sharon Brienza seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

1. **EXECUTIVE SESSION** - Preliminary discussions on site acquisitions for any publicly funded capital improvements.

**MOTION TO COME OUT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION AND RECONVENE OPEN MEETING.**

Deputy Mayor Ronald Belinko motioned to come out of Executive Session and reconvene the open meeting at 6:55 p.m. Ms. Ryer seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

2. **CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Steve Maneri called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

3. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

4. **ROLL CALL**

All Council members were present.

5. **NEW BUSINESS**

A. Discussion, Consideration, and Possible vote on Executive Session matters.

There was no vote needed for this item.

B. Discussion, Consideration, and Possible vote on the FY20 Audit – Herb Geary of TGM Group.

Mr. Herb Geary, of TGM Group, stated the Town “didn’t miss a beat” during the epidemic and this year’s audit was done in a timely manner so kudos to the Town staff for such a great job making sure he and his staff get what they need to do the audit, especially Finance Director Lisa Wynn, Town Manager Debbie Botchie and Town Finance Assistant Anna Scarola. Mr. Geary stated there were no major issues and the Town had another fiscally great year. Mr. Geary stated on pages three (3) to five (5) is Mr. Geary’s opinion and it’s the highest level of assurance TGM can provide as an independent auditor, so this is a good report. Mr. Geary stated pages six (6) to eight (8) is the required auditors report letter, and it basically says the Town is doing a

spectacular job with the staff it has but the recommendation is still to have at least one (1) additional staff member. Mr. Geary stated on pages ten (10) to fifteen (15) is the “management’s discussion and analysis,” and this is where Ms. Botchie and Ms. Wynn write a narrative about the Town in the recent fiscal year. Mr. Geary stated these are the pages you would direct a citizen to if they inquired about the audit. Ms. Botchie stated these are the pages which were placed up on the electronic agenda packet on the Town website. Mr. Geary stated there are two (2) sets of financial statements within this document – one (1) is the full accrual financial statement, and the other more of a modified cash basis financial statement. Mr. Geary stated on pages fifteen (15) to eighteen (18) is the balance sheet under the modified accrual basis, and we have a little over six-point-seven million dollars (\$6,700,000.00) cash, and unrestricted is six-point-six-million dollars (\$6,600,000.00). Mr. Geary stated the Town is fiscally in nice shape. Mr. Geary stated in pages nineteen (19) to twenty-two (22) is the capital governmental general fund balance and the Town has no debt. Mr. Geary stated the Town has done a super job of investing in CDs with multiple banks and working with an investment firm. Mr. Geary stated it was a great job having all of the Town’s money either insured by the FDIC or collateral as pledged by the institutions. Mr. Geary stated the total assets of the Town are eleven-million-five-hundred-ninety-five-thousand-three-hundred-thirty-nine dollars (\$11,595,339.00).

Mr. Geary stated the last few pages of the financial statements are budget versus actual type of information. Mr. Geary stated on page thirty-one (31) is the budgeted revenue, and the actual revenues were over budget by just a little over four-hundred-seventy-nine-thousand dollars (\$479,000.00), with most of that being building permit revenue and permit review income, which is over budget by about three-hundred-ninety-thousand dollars (\$390,000.00). Mr. Geary stated on page thirty-two (32), the total expenditures were under budget by sixty-five-thousand dollars (\$65,000.00) and the largest variant there is professional services, which were under budget by about thirty-thousand dollars (\$30,000.00). Mr. Geary started the last couple of pages are restricted revenues and restricted expenditures, and on page thirty-three (33), you can see the Town revenues were over budget by eight-hundred-thirty-one-thousand dollars (\$831,000.00), with transfer tax revenues about seven-hundred-four-thousand dollars (\$704,000.00) of that overage, and the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) park grant was not budgeted so the one-hundred-thousand dollars (\$100,000.00) is a positive variance. Mr. Geary stated on page thirty-four (34) are the restricted expenditures of almost two-million dollars (\$2,000,000.00), which is seven-hundred-eighty-six-thousand dollars (\$786,000.00) under budget. Mr. Geary stated capital outlay had the biggest expense at about one-point-six-million dollars (\$1,600,000.00) to go toward the Town park and community building, but it was under budget by about seven-hundred-seventy-five-thousand dollars (\$775,000.00). Mr. Geary stated they are not required to do the lease accounting until 2022 due to the Coronavirus. Mr. Geary stated the Town has a great team here with its staff and the information TGM received throughout the year is “spot-on,” which makes the decisions which have to be made here all that much easier.

Deputy Mayor Ronald Belinko stated yes, the staff is pretty efficient here. Secretary Barbara Ryer stated she has seen Town Finance Director Lisa Wynn and Town Finance Assistant Anna Scarola do their due diligence when any questions arise, and they do a great job. Mr. Geary stated he has to remain objective but it is difficult here because the staff does such a great job.

Council thanked Mr. Geary as well as Ms. Wynn and Ms. Botchie.

Treasurer Sharon Brienza motioned to accept the FY20 Audit as presented. Ms. Ryer seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

**C. Discussion, Consideration, and Possible vote on Resolution 21-09 regarding a grant for the Town Park pickleball courts.**

Town Clerk Matt Amerling stated a little background on this grant in the resolution tonight is it is the same grant the Town has applied for and received every year since first purchasing the park land. Mr. Amerling stated this grant is very advantageous for the Town through the State's Outdoor Recreation, Parks & Trails (ORPT) grant which is how the Town has gotten reimbursements for the park land, the park challenge course, and the park restroom and maintenance building. Mr. Amerling stated this year, he is applying for this grant for the park pickleball courts. Mr. Amerling stated he has to use as his basis the amount for the pickleball courts which was placed in the agreement approved by Council and signed by the Town, which was a total of one-hundred-sixty-thousand dollars (\$160,000.00). Mr. Amerling stated the ORPT grant is willing to match up to fifty percent (50%) reimbursement of the total cost, which, if awarded to the Town, would give the Town eighty-thousand dollars (\$80,000.00). Mr. Amerling stated this grant is the same as the past ORPT grants in that if the Town is awarded the full fifty percent (50%), DNREC will give the Town the eighty-thousand dollars (\$80,000.00) as a reimbursement and the Town will ultimately only paid eighty-thousand dollars (\$80,000.00) for the pickleball courts. Mr. Amerling stated the reason this resolution is being presented tonight is because it is a part of the grant application process, and the application is due by September 15, 2020. Mr. Belinko stated this is really a "no-brainer." Mayor Maneri and Ms. Ryer agreed and thanked Mr. Amerling for working on this grant.

Mr. Belinko motioned to approve Resolution 21-09. Ms. Brienza seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0. Ms. Brienza asked if the Town had a timeline as to when DNREC will let the Town know if it received the grant. Mr. Amerling stated yes, the Town usually receives the response by early November and the reimbursement check will usually come after the project is completed.

**D. Discussion, Consideration, and Possible vote on Resolution 21-10 regarding placing the Town Hall flag at half-staff in honor of "International Overdose Awareness Day" on August 31, 2020.**

Mr. Belinko stated the Town is not immune to the overdose situation and opioid use has been on the increase since the pandemic, and this is a great opportunity to increase awareness on this topic and Mr. Belinko supports this resolution. Ms. Ryer stated she thinks this is a wonderful thing to do and most people know someone who's directly touched by this; and it's sad and you feel hopeless. Ms. Ryer stated this is a small way of helping raise awareness and show the Town cares. Ms. Brienza stated she agrees and she does know a few people who have lost children to overdose so it's very sad. Mayor Maneri stated he is also good with this resolution as he's gone to a lot of fire calls and ambulance calls the Millville Volunteer Fire Company (MVFC) has had

for overdoses in this area. Mayor Maneri stated many times, these overdoses are not the victims' fault and it's sad most people think that people who die from an overdose then it's the victim's fault because they started it, and that is not always the case. Mayor Maneri stated he believes the Town should stand behind this cause and help out as much as possible.

Ms. Ryer motioned to approve Resolution 21-10. Mr. Belinko seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

**E. Discussion, Consideration, and Possible vote for an Educational and Governmental channel for the Town of Millville.**

Ms. Botchie stated the reason she brought this to Council's attention is because Ms. Botchie is in the final steps of negotiations for the Town's – as well Ocean View's, Bethany Beach's and South Bethany's – Mediacom cable franchise agreement, and Mediacom will give you an educational channel. Ms. Botchie stated speaking with one of her colleagues who had an educational channel, she worked with Mediacom to be able to get grants for this purpose. Ms. Botchie stated she doesn't know much about the channels and how it's run so Ms. Botchie reached out to Mr. Christopher Lord, who is the government relations representative who's been working with all the towns in the area, and he informed Ms. Botchie more about the educational channels, how much time is put into it, etc. Ms. Botchie stated Mr. Lord informed her the educational channels are "going by the wayside" because everyone is doing all their broadcasting on their websites, or some towns have their own YouTube channel. Ms. Botchie stated she had Mr. Amerling do an "all call" to other local municipalities to see which towns have either an educational channel or a YouTube channel. Ms. Botchie provided Council a spreadsheet of the towns who responded. Ms. Botchie stated Ocean View has an educational channel coming soon, but only Elsmere has an educational channel. Ms. Botchie stated she needs to know what Council wants her to do because if this is something Council wants, it will go into the Mediacom agreement which will come before Council next month.

Ms. Brienza stated she personally thinks the Town should have the channel and it should be a part of the negotiations because if we don't get it now, we have to wait another seven (7) years (the length of the contract) to consider it again. Ms. Brienza stated it doesn't surprise her some of these towns don't have anything; they may not know the cable company has to give them the PGE channel. Ms. Brienza stated she believes this is a wonderful, timely way to get information out to the public and it's something the Town should have. Mr. Belinko stated he's had a lot of experience with educational channels with a large school system and there are a lot of questions about this. Mr. Belinko stated they (Mediacom) may give you the channel but the Town has to purchase the equipment, plus someone has to keep it updated. Mr. Belinko asked if the Town has the staff to keep it updated, and does Millville have a large enough population to warrant having a channel and putting out that expense? Mr. Belinko asked how many Town residents subscribe to Mediacom because there are people who have either DirectTV or stream channels. Mr. Belinko asked Mr. Amerling how many people visit the Town website. Mr. Amerling stated he would have to research that number as he is not sure of an exact number because those numbers are kept by the State, who designs and maintains the data for the website. Mr. Belinko stated the Town has a great website, as well as information which is placed in and reported by

the *Coastal Point* newspaper, and the meetings are broadcast via teleconference so people don't have to leave their house, and there are still low numbers of attendance or visiting sites. Mr. Belinko stated educational channels are great if you're large enough to have personnel devoted to maintaining it, because if you don't keep the channel up-to-date, people will not tune in to watch it. Ms. Brienza stated the Town can get the channel and it's just there if we decide we want to use it. Ms. Botchie stated Ocean View is setting up a studio for its channel and, because Ms. Brienza has done this (channel), what types of information goes on the educational channel which the Town doesn't have on its website? Ms. Brienza stated what her town used it for was a lot of outside organizational, non-profit organizations if they were having something. Ms. Brienza stated we could use it for the Great Pumpkin Festival. Ms. Botchie stated that's one (1) time a year but how much daily stuff has to be done and how often do you do this? Ms. Brienza stated it all depends but it could be weekly or bi-weekly, but it would depend on what kind of information the Town is putting out there. Ms. Botchie stated it's not much different, though, from what the Town puts on its website. Mr. Belinko stated the few towns which do have a channel have a staff who is dedicated only to the channel and its maintenance. Ms. Botchie stated there are some towns who have their own information technology (IT) department.

Ms. Ryer stated she had a lot of questions such as what are the taxpayers of Millville getting out of this channel and Ms. Ryer really couldn't get an answer because it's not clear. Ms. Ryer stated the Town website is excellent; and the extra work on the Town staff as well as the maintenance would be a bit much, and just because you're getting grant money doesn't mean it's a good deal. Ms. Ryer stated there wasn't enough information about what it would cover and no one in her neighborhood who she knows has Mediacom – most people there have the dish or stream, and they have Verizon for the internet. Ms. Ryer stated she is bothered there is no competition with Mediacom (for cable) but that is Comcast's and Verizon's decision not to compete with Mediacom. Ms. Ryer stated even though she doesn't like or agree with monopolies, she knows the Town has to take Mediacom because the Town needs some kind of cable service, but Ms. Ryer really can't see any value in having the channel. Council Member Peter Michel stated he would have to have more information on this channel and what it entails; and the Town's website is so good and Mr. Michel doesn't know if this channel is what would be good for the entire Town. Mayor Maneri stated he agrees and he truthfully feels the Town does a great job with the website, which has all of the Town's information. Mayor Maneri stated if this thing is built with these cameras and they need to be maintained, the Town has its employees doing yet another job, and will the residents really watch the channel? Mayor Maneri asked how many residents actually go on the Town's website? Mayor Maneri stated when he gets asked questions, he mostly responds the information is right on the website, and most responses are "we didn't know you had a website." Mayor Maneri stated if you also load up the channel with information bi-weekly or monthly, people will complain it's the same information every day. Ms. Brienza stated there wouldn't be someone operating it every day. Mayor Maneri stated you have to look at this in its entirety, and most places people come from, there are enough events going on to justify a channel and fill it every day. Ms. Botchie stated the Town staff will do whatever Council decides to do.

Mr. Belinko motioned to not move forward with an educational and governmental channel for the Town. Ms. Ryer seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-1.

**6. CITIZENS' PRIVILEGE**

There were no comments.

**7. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING – TOWN COUNCIL MEETING, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2020**

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Belinko motioned to adjourn at 7:36 p.m. Ms. Brienza seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,  
Matt Amerling, Town Clerk